

Cage 8 Peacock

"I'm So Pretty, Oh So Pretty"

The peacock is best known for one thing: its colorful feathers. Outside of that showy tail the peacock would be a rather insignificant bird. But the peacock manages to show off and so gets itself taken care of and protected and has a nice, cozy home in our zoo.

The main task of the human peacock is to convince everyone how important he is. Whether the peacock really has the best plumage in town is not important. The human peacock is totally unaware of other people's plumage and he has convinced you of it.

The peacock doesn't have friends—he has investments. These investments are supposed to return dividends of praise. Some of his investments are supposed to admire his plumage. Others are for bragging about. His wife, of course, is something very special...and his kids possess some absolutely remarkable ability or talent.

He is deeply hurt if things can go on without him. The peacock is usually a fairly insignificant person; truly big people do not have to impress. But to himself, the peacock is terribly important. Whatever the peacock does,

he has a tendency to overdo. If he gets sick he must have the most magnificent doctor in town. Every event must be significant.

Some peacocks use their position to draw attention, some use their power, some their contacts, some their physical beauty, and some their smartness. At work the peacock is such a common animal that to describe all the verities would be tiresome. But let's look at a few of the more common ones.

There is the peacock who is absolutely indispensable. For some, this safe role is so important that they keep their work in a state of constant disarray in the hope that no one could take it over. The indispensable peacock likes to think that he is overworked. And no one else can handle as much work as well as he does.

Everyone can see how fine his feathers are. If the indispensable peacock works in a management position, he sets things up so that all work channels through him. We usually say of this animal that he can't delegate, but that's not really the case. He could delegate, but then he would not be as indispensable. And that is too close to his feared relationship.

Then there is the impressing peacock. Part of his plumage includes his salary, his office furnishings, the size of his staff, and the size of his budget. He likes to keep his office beautiful and organized so he can look down at those who can't run their sections as properly as he.

A relative of the impressive peacock is the mine-is-better-than-yours peacock. This peacock reduces everything to a contest. He competes with the person at the next desk; his department is in competition with the next department; his company is in competition with the next company. No matter what level he holds in the company, his scope reaches out to include his department, his section, his division, his company.

Interpersonally, he exchanges superiority-points for favors. He will be glad to do your work for you, if you acknowledge that you could not do it without him.

This peacock can turn vicious if not fed by praise. If a more brightly colored bird enters his territory, he will do everything possible to force the prettier bird to flee. He will try to make life miserable for him. He will use rumor and innuendo—even outright sabotage—to get rid of the other bird.

The mine-is-better peacock is easily offended. Even a trivial failure to pay him proper homage can bring his wrath upon you. Everyone must recognize that he is at the top of the pecking order, and pay him homage...or be ready for his attack.

Then there's the know-it-all peacock. He is especially prevalent in technical areas of a business (such as data processing or engineering) and in

sales. This peacock does not answer questions to communicate information, but: rather to prove how much more he knows than everyone else.

At home the peacock is often in his glory, especially if there are children around. With children the peacock is automatically bigger and smarter and has more power and authority. That's one reason the peacock has children: to show off. Sometimes the children become an extension of the peacock. Then the children are under terrific pressure to perform. This is the story behind the little league parents, and the stage mothers, and the you-must-do-well-in-school parents. The peacock demands respect from his children—not because he has earned it, but because everyone should 'ooh' and 'ahh' at his magnificence.

With a spouse or partner the peacock has many variations. Here are a few: There's "what a hard day I've had." There's "no one appreciates me." And "look at all I do for you." Or "I can't seem to ever get any peace around here." There's "we have the neatest house in town," or "the most beautiful," or "the ugliest," or "the sloppiest." There's "she couldn't live without me," "this is the best relationship in the world" or "you are the meanest, most insensitive person there is." There's the social climber, the show off, and being the Joneses that everyone tries to keep up with. There is setting the fad and being stylish. There is being up on the latest news, and there's taking pride in never paying attention to that junk. And On and on it goes, impressing people, pointing out how his is better than yours, how indispensable he is, and how much he knows.

With friends, the peacock stays true to form. He has more friends than anyone else, or a higher class of friends, or a more select group. He can hold his liquor better, or he can get drunker. He can tell more jokes, he can dance better, he knows more places to go, he gives better parties.

He monopolizes conversations because who, after all, could possibly have anything of importance to say other than him. His children, his car, his home, his vacation, his love affairs are all so unique that everyone else must be dying to find out about them.